

## **Georgia Shrimp Fishery Stakeholder Panel**

### **COMMERCIAL - 14**

#### **Food Shrimp Trawler - 7**

- |   |                                     |                                    |
|---|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 | <b>1 Pat Mathews (Chatham)</b>      | <b>Dock Owner / Dealer</b>         |
| 2 | <b>2 Sinky Boone (McIntosh)</b>     | <b>Boat Owner / Dock Owner</b>     |
| 3 | <b>3 Michael Sullivan (Chatham)</b> | <b>Owner/Operator</b>              |
| 4 | <b>4 Jimmy Drury (Glynn)</b>        | <b>Shrimp Boat Ecotourism</b>      |
| 5 | <b>5 Richard Puterbaugh (Glynn)</b> | <b>Owner/Operator</b>              |
| 6 | <b>6 Wesley Dickey (Glynn)</b>      | <b>Owner/Operator</b>              |
| 7 | <b>7 John Wallace (McIntosh)</b>    | <b>Owner/Operator &amp; Dealer</b> |

#### **Hand Retrieve Food Shrimp Trawl- 1**

- |   |   |                            |
|---|---|----------------------------|
| 8 | <b>1 Dave Lester Gale, Jr. (McIntosh)</b> | <b>Hand retrieve trawl</b> |
|---|---|----------------------------|

#### **Commercial Food Shrimp Cast Net - 4**

- |    |                                    |                    |
|----|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 9  | <b>1 Tim Jones (Camden)</b>        | <b>Cast netter</b> |
| 10 | <b>2 Henderson Hope (McIntosh)</b> | <b>Cast netter</b> |
| 11 | <b>3 Frank Sheffield (Camden)</b>  | <b>Cast netter</b> |
| 12 | <b>4 Rick James (McIntosh)</b>     | <b>Cast netter</b> |

#### **Live Bait - 2**

- |    |                              |                    |
|----|------------------------------|--------------------|
| 13 | <b>1 Don Adams (Chatham)</b> | <b>Bait dealer</b> |
|----|------------------------------|--------------------|

### **RECREATIONAL - 7**

- |    |                                  |                                      |
|----|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 14 | <b>1 Tim Currie (Liberty)</b>    | <b>Recreational Angler</b>           |
| 15 | <b>2 Van Wheeler (McIntosh)</b>  | <b>CCA-GA Rep &amp; Angler</b>       |
| 16 | <b>3 Buddy Deloach (Liberty)</b> | <b>Former State Rep &amp; Angler</b> |
| 17 | <b>4 Billy Griner (Glynn)</b>    | <b>Recreational angler</b>           |
| 18 | <b>5 Mark Noble (Glynn)</b>      | <b>Saltwater fishing guide</b>       |
| 19 | <b>7 Bud Thomas (McIntosh)</b>   | <b>Saltwater fishing guide</b>       |

# **Georgia Shrimp Fishery Stakeholder Panel**

## *Background Information*

There are many challenges facing those who participate in Georgia's shrimp fishery. There are conflicts between user groups, between user groups and the regulatory agencies, and between user groups and the general public or conservation groups. As the public trust agency responsible for protecting the living marine resources of the coast, it is imperative that the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) lead the process to resolve present conflicts, prevent future conflicts, and to advance shrimp fishery management.

You have volunteered to be a participant on the Georgia Shrimp Fishery Stakeholder Panel. As a stakeholder in Georgia's shrimp fishery, you have a unique and valuable perspective, one shaped by your experiences and knowledge. The purpose of this panel is to examine the way Georgia's shrimp fishery is regulated by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR). This will be accomplished through a series of meetings during which staff with the Carl Vinson Institute of Government will facilitate discussions about topics and issues of concerns. At the conclusion of these meetings, the panel will be expected to deliver recommendations to guide future management of Georgia's shrimp fishery.

DNR has recognized the need for change and will be an active part of this process. They will provide information to both stimulate and inform the discussions. They will bring in experts in various topic areas. They will provide a pleasant environment for your meetings including lunch and beverages during morning and afternoon breaks. Most importantly, they will listen to your discussions and consider all perspectives and opinions.

The goal of this process is to help DNR advance shrimp fishery management so as to: 1) maximize the opportunity for profit in commercial activities; 2) maximize opportunities for satisfaction in recreational activities; and 3) protect the ecological integrity of Georgia estuaries and nearshore Atlantic Ocean waters.

This can be a very productive summer on the coast of Georgia...we are looking forward to working with each of you in this effort. We hope that you will be open to new and different ideas and will consider the perspective of others with respect. We will not leave a topic incomplete, and whether it takes one or more meetings to resolve an issue, we will work until we have consensus to move on to another topic.

Attached are summaries of the comments collected during two town hall meetings, personal interviews with stakeholder panel members, and a DNR, Coastal Resources Division website interactive survey. This information is presented for your consideration as you begin a series of meetings to discuss management of Georgia's shrimp fishery. A document containing verbatim comments will be distributed at the first stakeholder panel meeting.

## ***Town Hall Meetings***

In April, two town hall meetings were held to allow the general public to express their opinions about management of Georgia's shrimp fishery. These meetings generated a good deal of meaningful input for you to consider as a member of the Georgia Shrimp Fishery Stakeholder Panel. The majority of participants attending both the Brunswick and the Pooler meetings expressed support for the Department of Natural Resources in their actions surrounding the closing of the sounds to trawling, setting seasons for shrimp harvest, and the approach of individual DNR staffers to the people involved in the shrimp fishery. The majority also stated that there needs to be a new or fresh look at a variety of regulatory issues involving such things as modified cast nets, the opening of state waters (zones) for shrimping, and hours of operation.

The biggest threats to the commercial sector of Georgia's shrimp fishery are economic impacts of imported shrimp, degraded coastal water quality, black gill disease, and the high cost of operating trawlers. The participants at the town hall meetings translated these concerns directly into the major issues facing the fishery. Pollution, residential and commercial development in the coastal counties, lack of good research and scientific surveys, and ineffective marketing of Georgia shrimp were identified as key elements that need to be addressed.

When asked about regulatory changes, the participants pointed to the following as the top priorities:

- Decisions based on science, not seat-of-pants feelings or politics
- Coordinate the opening of shrimp season to allow roe shrimp to spawn
- Allow modified cast nets
- Water quality and habitat protection: freshwater wetlands, erosion and sediment buffers; increased enforcement and stiffer penalties
- Put higher fees and stricter regulations on non-resident shrimpers.
- Marketing of our "wild Georgia shrimp"
- TED/BRD device inclusion – it works. Compare
- Help with price of shrimp
- Better enforcement and tougher penalties for violators of current rules, for every group – not just focusing on certain ones – both recreational and commercial
- 3/8 inch mesh done away with for cast nets; standardize 1/2 inch or larger for bait and food shrimp
- Limiting development on wetlands
- Changing open seasons by monitoring shrimp populations, sizes and life cycles
- Government subsidies or tax incentives for fuel purchases – tax credit

## ***Stakeholder Interview Information***

Each of the members of the stakeholder panel was asked to participate in a preliminary interview. The following is a summary of the information gathered during those interviews:

- The general consensus view of the stakeholders is that the majority of attempts by DNR to assist the shrimp fishery have been well intended, whether successful or not. This view reflects, to some degree, the overall responses provided during the town hall meetings and the DNR website survey. With this said, there appears to be an underlying distrust within the shrimping community for DNR. This does not appear to be manifested toward specific individuals but more toward the overall DNR governing structure.
- It appears that the stakeholder group feels that politics play too much of a role in the shrimp fishery today. Some believe that the differing rules and regulations are not beneficial to the prosperity of the commercial shrimp fishermen, either cast netter or trawler. These opinions were similar to those of many individuals who attended the town hall meetings.
- There was little consistency among stakeholder panel members on the subject of enhancing Georgia's shrimp fishery. However, one sentiment was common. Everyone should be treated fairly and decisions should be based on research...practical research.
- Again, treatment of all taking part in Georgia's shrimp fishery (recreational, commercial cast netters, commercial trawler) should be fair and based on sound research. Need to enforce volume of catch voiced strongly.
- The loudest voice (comment) was for water quality and its impact on the shrimp fishery. There was some consensus around the potential for making stronger "standards" – then enforcing these standards.
- Regulatory changes revolved around the setting of seasons, cast net mesh size and modification, and reduction of bycatch.

## **DNR Website Survey**

The Coastal Resources Division of the Department of Natural Resources maintains an interactive survey on its website. Since April, this survey has been focused on shrimp fishery management. The following is an overview of the findings as of May 31, 2005:

- Over 97% if the responders were recreation fishing license holders (81 of 83 responding). Approximately 10% also have commercial licenses of some kind.
- Responders think that:
  - Closing the sounds to trawlers was and is good
  - Limits on shrimp catch are good
  - Do not agree with limiting how shrimp are caught but think enforcement of volume of catch is important
  - Believe DNR gives too much to commercial interests
  - Think modified cast nets should be allowed
  - Commercial cast netters ignore the regulations because commercial cast netting regulations are not enforceable as written
  - Catch limits are not being enforced
  - Enforcement in McIntosh County is lax
  - By-catch from trawlers can be reduced further
  - Commercial trawling should not be allowed within one mile of the beaches year round
  - Commercial bait shrimpers violate rules on areas to be fished and taking shrimp for sale as food
- Changes to management should include:
  - Allow shrimpers to modify their cast nets (an often stated request)
  - Better enforcement of shrimping regulations
  - Mesh size of ½ inch or larger on cast nets, modified or not
  - Longer closed season to allow for shrimp to grow
- Other comments included the following:
  - I lived in that dreaded state to the south of us, and it has lots of problems!!! It is an example of what could happen to us. Please take care of or shrimping management in a wise and fair way. Thank you for your management of a precious resource and ***know that I'm watching what you do!!***

## ***Shrimp Stakeholder Participation Table***

	June 9	June 30	July 13	Aug 9	Sept 13	Oct 26
	Commercial Cast Net	Recreational Cast Net	Commercial Trawling	Bait Shrimping	Summary	Post Public
<b>Trawlers – 7</b>	6	5	5	3	3	7
Sinky Boone	X	X	X	X	X	X
Wesley Dickey	X					X
Jimmy Drury	X		X		X	X
Pat Matthews		X	X			X
Richard Puterbaugh	X	X				X
Michael Sullivan	X	X	X	X	X	X
John Wallace	X	X	X	X		X
<b>Hand Retrieve – 1</b>	1		1	1	1	1
Dave Gale	X		X	X	X	X
<b>Cast Net – 4</b>	4	4	4	4	4	3
Henderson Hope	X	X	X	X	X	X
Rick James	X	X	X	X	X	
Tim Jones	X	X	X	X	X	X
Frank Sheffield	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Bait – 1</b>	1	1	1	1	1	1
Don Adams	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>RECREATIONAL - 6</b>	5	6	4	3	4	3
Tim Curry	X	X	X	X	X	X
Buddy DeLoach	X	X				
Billy Griner	X	X	X		X	
Mark Noble	X	X	X	X	X	X
Bud Thomas		X	X	X	X	X
Van Wheeler	X	X				
	17	16	15	12	13	15